

The Vision of the Cross

101

If there were choice of versions, I would unhesitatingly accept the one which contained most of the miraculous and the abnormal. Nor does the oath which Constantine swore in support of his story add anything to its credibility. It was his habit to swear an oath when he wished to be emphatic. Are we, then, to consider that the whole legend was an invention of the Emperor's from beginning to end? In this connection it is important to take into account the narrative of Nazarius, a rhetorician who delivered formal panegyric upon Constantine on the anniversary of his tenth year of rule, and took the opportunity of reviewing the whole campaign against Maxentius. Nazarius was a pagan; what then was his pagan version, if any, of the miracle described by Eusebius and the Emperor? Did the pagans attribute divine assistance to Constantine throughout his critical campaign? The answer is unmistakable. They did so most unequivocally. Nazarius tells us * that all Gaul was talking with awe and wonder of the marvels which had taken place, how the soldiers of Constantine had seen in the sky celestial armies marching in battle array and had been dazzled by their flashing shields and glittering armour. Not only had the dull eyes of earthly men for once availed to look upon heavenly brightness; Constantine's soldiery had also heard the shouts of these armies in the sky, "We seek Constantine; we are marching to the aid of Constantine/*" Clearly the pagan as well as the Christian world insisted

* *Pan. Vet.* x., 14.

| *Constantinum petimus : Constantino imus **auxilio**.*